

VitroScript



Execution Economics Canon

Why do some systems consistently convert resources into outcomes while others consistently convert resources into activity?

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Foundational Paper No. 1 - Version 1.0*

THE EXECUTION ECONOMICS CANON

Understanding Why Projects Succeed, Fail, or Stall

Across Africa and many emerging economies, substantial resources are invested annually in projects, institutions, and industrial initiatives that fail to achieve their intended outcomes. Conventional explanations often emphasize insufficient finance, weak governance, limited capacity, or infrastructural deficits. While these factors are significant, they do not fully account for the recurrence of similar failure patterns across sectors, countries, and institutional types, even under varying resource conditions. This paper proposes an alternative perspective. Execution Economics argues that many development challenges are better understood as system failures rather than resource failures. The central issue is not merely the availability of capital, but the design of institutional systems capable of converting capital, policy, and intent into measurable outcomes.

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Abstract

Development failures across Africa and many emerging economies are commonly attributed to shortages of finance, weak governance, inadequate infrastructure, or limited technical capacity. These constraints matter. They do not explain the recurring patterns of underperformance. Execution Economics proposes that many development failures are system failures rather than resource failures. This paper presents the first public articulation of the VitroScript Canon. The Canon is a structured framework built around three interconnected architectures: Execution Architecture, Value Architecture, and Performance Architecture. Nine doctrines identify the recurring mechanisms that block the conversion of intent, capital, and policy into measurable outcomes. The Canon offers a practical framework for earlier diagnosis and better institutional design.

Keywords: *Execution Economics, Execution Architecture, Value Architecture, Performance Architecture, No-Objection Paradox, Ownership Illusion, Coordination Tax, Export Illusion, Dependency Premium, Offtake Gap, Feasibility Gap, Capacity Before Capital, Execution Premium, Institutional Systems, Project Delivery, Industrial Transformation, Africa.*

Executive Summary

Execution Economics studies how systems convert intent, capital, and policy into measurable outcomes. This paper presents the VitroScript Canon. The Canon organizes applied doctrines into three architectures.

Execution Architecture explains how institutions fail to convert decisions into outcomes through the No-Objection Paradox, the Ownership Illusion, and the Coordination Tax.

Value Architecture explains how economies fail to capture what they produce through the Export Illusion, the Dependency Premium, and the Offtake Gap.

Performance Architecture explains how institutions fail to become investable and deliverable through the Feasibility Gap, Capacity Before Capital, and the Execution Premium.

Most development failures are not resource failures. They are system failures. These failures arise from a limited number of recurring mechanisms. Early recognition allows deliberate system redesign. This is Foundational Paper No. 1 in an evolving research program. Its propositions invite empirical testing and practical application.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Every year, billions of dollars are committed to development projects across Africa and emerging economies that fail to deliver their intended outcomes not because resources are insufficient, but because the systems responsible for converting those resources into results are inadequately designed. This paper proposes a framework for understanding and addressing that problem. This paper argues that these recurring patterns point toward a deeper structural design. Projects frequently fail not simply because resources are insufficient, but because the systems responsible for converting intent into measurable outcomes are inadequately designed. Understanding those systems requires a different analytical perspective. That perspective is proposed here as Execution Economics.

1.2 Purpose of the Paper

This paper introduces the first public articulation of the Execution Economics Canon, a structured framework for analyzing recurring mechanisms that influence project delivery, industrial transformation, institutional performance, and investment readiness. Rather than presenting isolated observations or management techniques, the Canon proposes an integrated explanatory architecture organized around recurring system mechanisms. Its objective is not merely to explain why projects fail after the fact. Its broader purpose is to assist policymakers, institutional leaders, project developers, investors, and researchers in recognizing structural weaknesses before significant resources are committed. Early recognition creates opportunities for redesign that increases the probability of successful execution.

1.3 Central Proposition

The central proposition developed throughout this paper is straightforward. Development outcomes are determined not only by the quantity of resources available but by the quality of the systems responsible for deploying those resources. Execution Economics therefore proposes that many institutional and industrial failures are better understood as system failures than as resource failures. If this proposition is correct, improving development outcomes requires more than increasing investment. It requires improving the institutional architectures through which investment becomes execution.

1.4 Origins of the Framework

The ideas presented in this paper emerged through sustained professional engagement with project structuring, institutional development, investment readiness, agro-industrial transformation, and public-sector advisory work across Central and West Africa. Over time, similar patterns appeared repeatedly. Projects with different objectives encountered remarkably similar implementation obstacles. Institutions operating in unrelated sectors exhibited comparable governance weaknesses. Industrial initiatives separated by geography displayed equivalent coordination problems. These recurring observations suggested that many apparent failures were manifestations of deeper structural mechanisms rather than isolated operational problems. The process of identifying, naming, organizing, and refining those mechanisms ultimately became the VitroScript Canon.

2. What Is Execution Economics?

Execution Economics is proposed as an analytical framework for studying how systems convert intent, capital, and policy into measurable outcomes. The framework begins from a simple observation. Every development initiative follows a broadly similar sequence. Intent generates decisions, Decisions mobilize resources, and Resources are deployed through institutions. Institutions produce outcomes. Between resources and outcomes lies an execution system. That system determines whether ambitions become reality. Traditional development analysis frequently concentrates on the quality of ideas, the availability of finance, or the external environment within which projects operate. Execution Economics shifts attention toward the architecture through which those elements interact. Its central concern is neither the generation of ideas nor the mobilization of resources. Its concern is conversion. Why do similar resources produce dramatically different outcomes? Why do some institutions consistently transform funding into measurable impact while others transform funding into prolonged activity with limited results?

Execution Economics proposes that the answer often lies in the structure of institutional systems rather than in the availability of resources themselves. The framework therefore treats execution as a distinct object of analysis rather than merely the final stage of project management. Execution is understood as the interaction of governance structures, authority relationships, coordination mechanisms, accountability arrangements, capability systems, and value creation processes that collectively determine whether intended outcomes materialize. This perspective connects with several established scholarly traditions while maintaining a distinct analytical focus. Institutional economics demonstrates that institutions influence economic performance. Organizational theory explains how organizational structures affect behavior. Public administration examines state capability and implementation. Development economics explores the relationship between governance and growth.

Execution Economics builds upon these traditions by concentrating specifically on recurring execution mechanisms operating within institutional systems. Instead of asking only whether institutions matter, it asks: Which institutional mechanisms repeatedly prevent projects from converting potential into measurable performance? This shift from institutional importance to institutional mechanism forms the foundation of the VitroScript Canon. The Canon does not claim to provide a comprehensive explanation for every development outcome. Rather, it proposes a structured set of hypotheses regarding recurring mechanisms that practitioners and researchers can observe, test, refine, and apply across multiple sectors and institutional contexts. Ultimately, Execution Economics should be understood not as a finished discipline but as an evolving research program. Its value will depend not upon the originality of its terminology alone, but upon the extent to which its propositions withstand empirical examination, generate useful diagnostics, and contribute to better institutional design.

3. Why the Canon Was Developed

3.1 The Diagnostic Gap

The VitroScript Canon emerged from a practical problem encountered repeatedly in institutional advisory work, project development, and investment readiness. When projects underperform, explanations are usually developed after failure has become visible. Reviews often identify

proximate causes such as procurement delays, inadequate financing, governance weaknesses, insufficient stakeholder engagement, or poor project management. These explanations are frequently accurate. However, they rarely explain why similar patterns recur across different sectors, institutions, countries, and financing arrangements. The same categories of failure continue to appear despite new policies, revised procedures, increased funding, and repeated institutional reforms. This observation suggested that many commonly identified causes are symptoms rather than underlying mechanisms. Execution Economics was developed to investigate those deeper mechanisms.

3.2 From Experience to Framework

The Canon did not originate from a single project or research program. It emerged gradually through sustained professional engagement with institutional systems across project preparation, investment structuring, agro-industrial development, governance reform, and organizational development. Across these engagements, certain observations became increasingly difficult to ignore. Institutions with capable professionals still failed to execute. Well-financed projects continued to stall. Industrial initiatives produced output without generating proportional economic value. Development programs often generated activity while producing limited transformation. Despite differences in sector, geography, and institutional mandate, similar execution patterns repeatedly appeared. The recurrence of these patterns suggested that they reflected structural properties of institutional systems rather than isolated operational failures.

3.3 Naming the Mechanisms

Observation alone is insufficient for systematic analysis. Recurring patterns become analytically useful only when they can be clearly identified, consistently described, and distinguished from related phenomena. For this reason, the framework adopts named doctrines. Each doctrine represents a proposed recurring mechanism rather than a unique event. Naming these mechanisms serves several purposes. First, it provides practitioners with a shared vocabulary for discussing execution problems. Second, it encourages diagnosis at the level of institutional architecture rather than individual events. Third, it facilitates comparison across sectors and organizational contexts. Finally, it creates propositions that can be examined, challenged, refined, and tested through future empirical research. The objective is not simply to create terminology, it is to improve diagnosis.

3.4 From Individual Doctrines to an Integrated Architecture

Initially, the doctrines were developed independently. Over time, relationships among them became increasingly apparent. Certain mechanisms consistently influenced decision-making processes. Others primarily affected value creation within industrial systems. Still others influenced institutional credibility and investment readiness. These relationships suggested that the doctrines were not isolated concepts. They formed interconnected components of a broader explanatory framework. This recognition led to the development of three architecture clusters:

Execution Architecture

Examining how institutions convert decisions into measurable outcomes.

Value Architecture

Examining how economies create, retain, or lose economic value across production systems.

Performance Architecture

Examining how institutions become capable of attracting and deploying resources effectively.

Together, these three architectures constitute the current structure of the VitroScript Canon.

4. The Central Question

Every discipline is organized around a defining question. Economics asks how societies allocate scarce resources. Strategy asks how organizations achieve sustained competitive advantage. Public administration asks how governments translate authority into collective outcomes.

Execution Economics asks a different question:

Why do some institutional systems consistently convert intent, resources, and policy into measurable outcomes while others consistently convert them into activity without sustained delivery?

This distinction is fundamental. Much of the existing development literature explains why countries possess different levels of capital, infrastructure, institutional quality, or governance capacity. Far less attention has been devoted to the institutional mechanisms that determine whether these assets are successfully converted into execution. The framework proposes that the main indicator is neither intent nor resources alone, but the architecture of the system through which they are translated into outcomes. Accordingly, the analytical focus shifts from projects themselves to the institutional systems within which projects operate. Per this canon, Intent creates ambition; Resources create possibility; Systems determine outcomes.

5. The Execution Economics Canon Map

Every mature discipline requires an organizing architecture that explains how its constituent concepts relate to one another. In economics, production, exchange, and consumption form an integrated system. In organizational theory, strategy, structure, and processes interact continuously. Likewise, Execution Economics is not a collection of independent doctrines but a coherent framework whose components describe different dimensions of the same institutional reality.

The VitroScript Canon therefore organizes its foundational propositions into three complementary architecture clusters. Each architecture addresses a distinct analytical question while remaining structurally interconnected with the others.

The first, **Execution Architecture**, examines how institutions convert decisions into action. It focuses on authority, ownership, accountability, coordination, and the mechanisms through which implementation either accelerates or stalls.

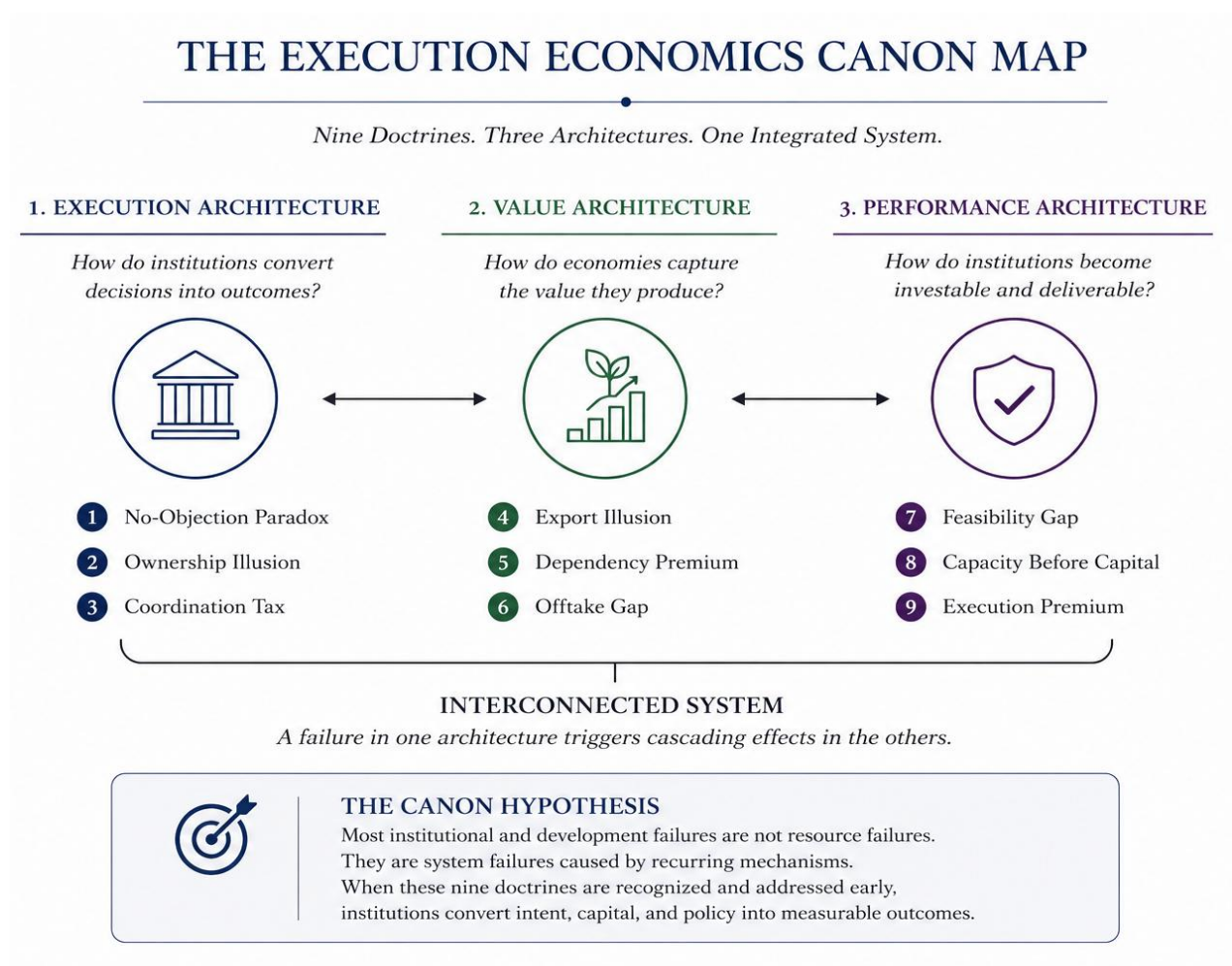
The second, **Value Architecture**, examines how economies and organisations capture, retain, and expand value from productive activity. Rather than concentrating solely on production volumes, it analyses where value is created, where it leaks, and how structural dependencies limit long-term competitiveness.

The third, **Performance Architecture** examines how institutions become capable of attracting capital, executing complex programmes, and sustaining performance over time. It focuses on institutional capability, investment readiness, execution credibility, and the relationship between governance systems and long-term development outcomes.

Together, these three architectures provide a systems perspective on institutional performance. Execution determines whether decisions become action. Value determines whether productive activity generates lasting economic benefit. Performance determines whether institutions develop the capability required to sustain both execution and value creation over time.

Accordingly, the Canon proposes that development outcomes emerge not from isolated interventions but from the interaction of these three institutional architectures.

Figure 1.



Architectural Interconnection Matrix

Although presented separately for analytical clarity, the three architectures are not independent. Weakness in one architecture frequently generates cascading effects throughout the others. Institutional failure therefore tends to propagate across the system rather than remain confined to a single domain.

Primary Institutional Failure	Cascading Effect	Likely System Outcome
Fragmented authority and excessive coordination within the Execution Architecture	Slower project delivery, delayed infrastructure, and weakened implementation capacity	Expansion of the Offtake Gap and reduced value capture within the Value Architecture
Persistent value leakage and structural dependency within the Value Architecture	Reduced profitability, constrained domestic capability development, and weaker industrial competitiveness	Widening of the Feasibility Gap and reduced investment attractiveness within the Performance Architecture
Weak institutional capability or premature capital deployment within the Performance Architecture	Capital enters systems lacking governance capacity, execution discipline, and operational readiness	Reinforcement of the No-Objection Paradox, Ownership Illusion, and Coordination Tax within the Execution Architecture

This interaction illustrates an important proposition of Execution Economics. Institutional failures rarely occur in isolation. They reinforce one another through feedback loops that progressively reduce execution capability, weaken value retention, and diminish long-term institutional performance. Contrariwise, improvements within one architecture frequently strengthen the others.

Concentrated accountability improves execution.

Better execution strengthens industrial capability.

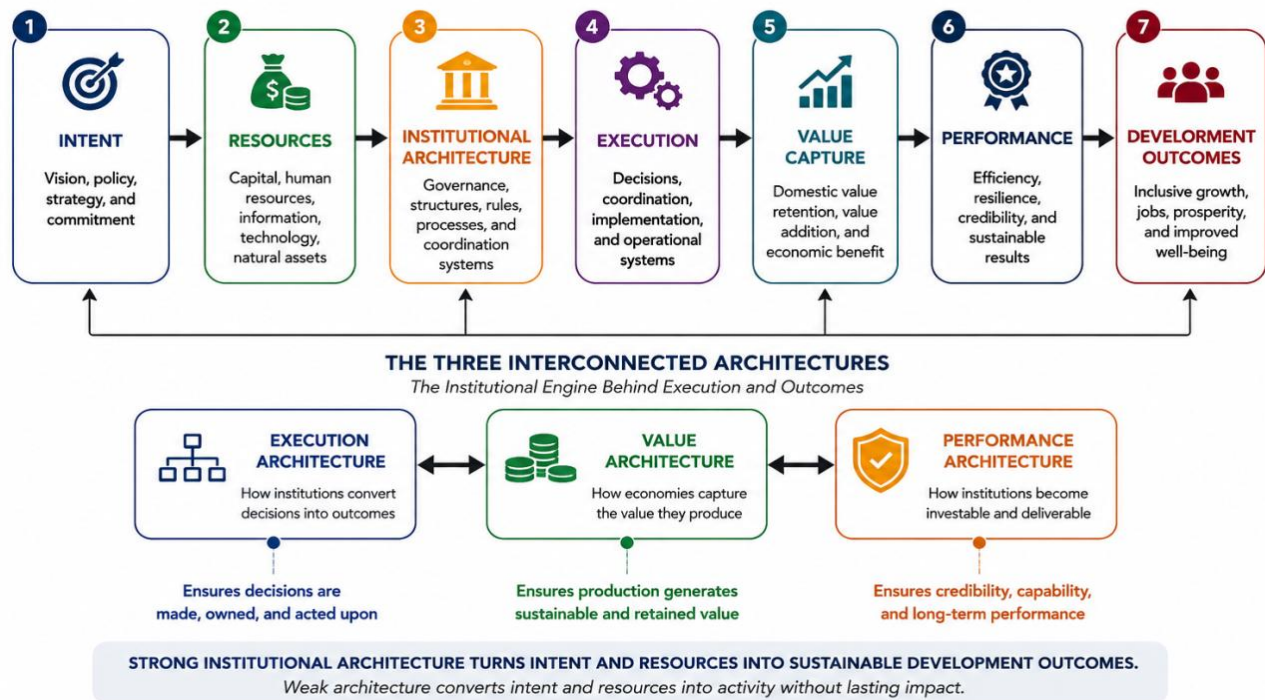
Stronger capability enhances investor confidence.

Increased investor confidence provides resources that can be deployed more effectively because the underlying execution system has already improved.

Execution Economics therefore treats institutional performance as an integrated system rather than a collection of disconnected management problems. The illustrative cases presented throughout this paper are not offered as proof of the doctrines. Rather, they demonstrate how the proposed mechanisms may manifest in practice. The doctrines require broader empirical testing across larger comparative datasets before generalizable conclusions can be drawn.

Figure 2. The Logic of Execution Economics

From Intent to Development Outcomes through Institutional Architecture



6. Execution Architecture

How Institutions Fail to Convert Decisions into Outcomes

6.1 Introduction

Execution Architecture examines the institutional conditions that determine whether decisions become measurable outcomes. Across governments, corporations, development agencies, and large programs, execution rarely fails because objectives are absent. It fails because authority, ownership, and coordination become progressively disconnected during implementation.

Execution Economics proposes that three recurring mechanisms explain much of this disconnection.

The No-Objection Paradox examines decision authority.

The Ownership Illusion examines accountability.

The Coordination Tax examines the cumulative cost generated by fragmented execution systems.

Together these doctrines describe one institutional architecture rather than three independent observations.

6.2 The No-Objection Paradox

Execution Economics proposes that the No-Objection Paradox describes the condition in which institutional systems create numerous actors capable of delaying a decision while investing very few actors with the authority to conclude it. Participation increases while, decision authority decreases. The consequence is that institutional processes expand while execution slows. Modern organizations rightly seek transparency, consultation, and accountability. To achieve these objectives, approval processes often involve multiple departments, committees, oversight bodies, technical experts, legal advisers, procurement units, financial controllers, and executive authorities. Each participant contributes valuable expertise. However, institutional complexity creates an unintended consequence. Every additional approval point introduces another opportunity for delay. When multiple actors possess effective veto power but very few possess decisive authority, the safest institutional behavior frequently becomes postponement rather than commitment. Execution Economics proposes that this asymmetry represents the base of the No-Objection Paradox. This doctrine leads one to anticipate that projects involving numerous oversight bodies will exhibit extended decision timelines despite advanced technical readiness.

This mechanism is illustrated by the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor Highway project, a flagship transnational infrastructure initiative spanning Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, and Nigeria. As of mid-2026, the project has experienced repeated delays in reaching construction milestones. Original timelines for groundbreaking were missed due to the need for coordination among five sovereign governments, multiple regional economic communities, national ministries, and various development partners. Each stakeholder layer introduces additional review and approval requirements. Technical studies may be complete, environmental clearances obtained, and financing discussions advanced, yet final execution decisions remain stalled in multi-lateral committees. PIC Research (2025)

The 2026 Project Management Institute *Pulse of the Profession* report provides quantitative confirmation. 44 percent of project professionals in Sub-Saharan Africa reported missed delivery deadlines - well above the global average of 35 percent. Crucially, 41 percent identified delays in stakeholder decision-making as a primary constraint, compared to 34 percent globally (PMI, 2026). further documents similar patterns across major African infrastructure initiatives, where fragmented authority creates numerous veto points but few clear decision owners.

The above real-world cases directly confirm the No-Objection Paradox. The proliferation of consultation mechanisms, while valuable for transparency, has produced exactly the asymmetry the doctrine describes: widespread participation without concentrated authority. The result is prolonged pre-construction phases that increase costs, erode investor confidence, and delay the economic benefits the corridor was designed to deliver. The doctrine thus offers a precise diagnostic lens for why technically sound, well-funded projects remain stuck in perpetual planning.

The framework identifies three conditions that commonly reinforce this mechanism:

Fragmented authority. Decision-making authority is distributed across numerous organizational units without clear concentration of final responsibility;

Asymmetric risk. Approving a difficult decision creates personal accountability. Requesting additional review rarely does. Institutional incentives therefore favor caution;

Procedural substitution. Processes gradually become substitutes for ownership. Progress is measured by completed procedures rather than completed outcomes.

Infrastructure projects involving multiple ministries frequently demonstrate this pattern. Technical approval may be complete. Environmental approval may be complete. Financial assessment may be complete. Legal review may be complete. Yet implementation remains stalled because final ownership of the decision has become dispersed across the approval process itself.

No individual actor possesses sufficient authority or incentive to conclude the sequence. Execution Economics does not argue against consultation. Consultation improves decision quality. The framework instead argues that consultation and ownership must remain distinct. Many actors may contribute to a decision. One actor should ultimately own it. High-performing institutions distinguish clearly between consultation and decision authority. Broad participation should strengthen decisions. It should not replace ownership. One project - One accountable owner - One final decision.

6.3 The Ownership Illusion

Execution Economics proposes that the Ownership Illusion describes the condition in which responsibility is distributed across many actors while ownership of outcomes belongs to none. Activities have owners. Processes have participants. Meetings have attendees. Yet outcomes remain collectively owned. Collective ownership frequently becomes practical non-ownership. Most organizations allocate responsibilities through organizational charts, job descriptions, reporting structures, and governance frameworks. These instruments define who performs particular activities. They often define less clearly who owns the ultimate result. Execution Economics distinguishes between responsibility and ownership. Responsibility concerns tasks. Ownership concerns outcomes. The two concepts frequently become confused. The ownership illusion doctrine suggests that multi-stakeholder initiatives with diffused accountability will generate considerable activity yet deliver limited tangible results.

Uganda's Standard Gauge Railway project clearly shows this illusion at work. Responsibility for different segments is divided among the Ministry of Works and Transport, the Uganda Railways Corporation, regional bodies, and international financing partners. Each entity handles specific tasks such as procurement or land acquisition. However no single institution holds clear enforceable ownership of the overall delivery timeline and successful operational handover. Financing negotiations have extended over several years. Progress reports and inter-agency meetings continue while physical construction on key sections remains limited (The EastAfrican June 2026).

This situation is not unique to Uganda nor limited to the Transport sector, many multi-stakeholder African infrastructure and agro-industrial programs exhibit the same pattern. Functional responsibilities are assigned through committees and working groups. Yet ultimate accountability for project success or failure is diffused. This leads to increased activity in the form of studies and meetings. Measurable outcomes such as completed infrastructure or

operational facilities lag behind. The illusion allows institutions to appear engaged while actual delivery stalls.

Three institutional conditions commonly reinforce this mechanism:

Functional responsibility replaces outcome ownership - departments complete assigned activities while no individual owns overall delivery;

Retrospective accountability - responsibility is examined after failure occurs rather than established before execution begins;

Authority and accountability diverge - Individuals expected to deliver outcomes lack corresponding authority over resources or decisions.

The Ownership Illusion creates predictable organizational behavior: Problems become everyone's concern. Solutions become someone else's responsibility. Meetings increase. Escalations increase. Reports increase. Delivery slows. The institution appears active while outcomes remain limited. Execution Economics proposes that this distinction between activity and ownership explains why organizations may appear highly productive while producing relatively modest measurable results. Thus, ownership should be assigned before execution begins. The key governance question is not: Who participates? It is: Who owns success? And equally, who owns failure? Institutions that answer these questions clearly generally reduce ambiguity throughout implementation.

6.4 The Coordination Tax

Execution Economics proposes that the Coordination Tax represents the cumulative cost generated when fragmented ownership requires increasing levels of coordination. Unlike financial taxes, the Coordination Tax rarely appears explicitly within project budgets. Instead, it accumulates indirectly through delays, duplicated effort, repeated meetings, approval cycles, administrative overhead, and lost opportunities. Every organizational handover consumes resources. Information must be transferred. Responsibilities clarified. Meetings organized. Approvals obtained. Questions revisited. Individually these costs appear modest. Collectively they become substantial. Execution Economics suggest that coordination costs increase disproportionately as ownership becomes increasingly fragmented. Beyond a certain point, additional coordination contributes less to execution than to institutional maintenance. The organization begins coordinating itself more than it coordinates outcomes. Thus, the doctrine suggests that initiatives with fragmented authority structures will incur significant hidden administrative burdens and prolonged timelines.

The case of the Lobito Corridor project linking mineral resources in DRC and Zambia to Angola's Lobito port illustrates this tax in action. The initiative involves multiple governments, international donors, private mining companies, and logistics operators. Overlapping compliance requirements and distinct procedures from different partners have created repeated stakeholder meetings and approval cycles. These coordination demands have extended project timelines and increased administrative overhead significantly. The French Institute for International and Strategic Affairs report highlights seven critical hurdles largely stemming from coordination challenges (IRIS Report June 2025).

Broader cross-border African infrastructure projects show similar effects. Multiple handoffs between national agencies, regional bodies, and donors require constant information transfer, responsibility clarification, and risk reallocation discussions. Individually these steps appear necessary for alignment. Collectively they consume substantial executive time and resources. This reduces the proportion of total investment converted into actual physical delivery and operational results (BCG 2025).

Although further empirical research is required, potential indicators of the coordination tax include:

- i. Increasing approval layers
- ii. Repeated stakeholder meetings
- iii. Escalating administrative correspondence
- iv. Extended procurement cycles
- v. Frequent responsibility disputes
- vi. High transaction costs relative to implementation costs
- vii. Declining execution speed despite adequate funding

These indicators should not individually be interpreted as evidence of the Coordination Tax.

Rather, their persistent combination may suggest its presence. Execution Economics proposes that the Coordination Tax affects organizations through several channels simultaneously. It increases project duration. It raises administrative expenditure. It reduces institutional agility. It weakens investor confidence. It contributes to stakeholder fatigue. Eventually, it lowers the proportion of organizational effort converted into measurable outcomes. Coordination should exist to support ownership. Ownership should never exist merely to sustain coordination. The objective of institutional design is therefore not eliminating coordination but reducing unnecessary coordination through clearer authority structures.

6.5 Causal Relationship within the Execution Architecture

The three doctrines are proposed as an interconnected sequence rather than independent mechanisms. The current framework hypothesizes the following progression:

Authority becomes increasingly fragmented

↓

The No-Objection Paradox becomes active

↓

Ownership becomes increasingly diffuse

↓

The Ownership Illusion emerges

↓

Coordination requirements increase

↓

The Coordination Tax accumulates

This causal sequence represents a theoretical proposition requiring future empirical examination. If supported through comparative research, it would provide a practical diagnostic framework for identifying execution failure before projects begin to underperform.

7. Value Architecture

How Economies Fail to Capture What They Produce

7.1 Introduction

Production alone does not generate prosperity. Prosperity depends upon where value is created, retained, and reinvested throughout an economic system. Many developing economies have significantly expanded production and exports over recent decades while continuing to capture only a limited proportion of the value generated by those activities.

Execution Economics proposes that this apparent contradiction can be understood through three recurring mechanisms.

The Export Illusion examines value leakage.

The Dependency Premium examines structural dependence.

The Offtake Gap examines market execution.

Together they describe the institutional architecture through which productive activity either generates sustainable industrial capability or reinforces long-term dependence.

7.2 The Export Illusion

Execution Economics posits that the Export Illusion arises from a structural measurement problem in which export performance is interpreted primarily through production volume or export revenue rather than through value retained within the domestic economy. Higher exports are frequently celebrated as evidence of economic progress. The framework proposes that export growth and industrial development are related but distinct phenomena. An economy can increase exports substantially while retaining only a small proportion of the total value ultimately created from its resources. Primary commodity exports generate income. Industrial processing generates value. These two activities should not be treated as equivalent. The Export Illusion occurs when policymakers evaluate production success without adequately considering downstream value capture. According to the Export illusion doctrine, economies heavily reliant on raw commodity exports will capture only a modest share of total value created from their resources. Cameroon's cocoa sector in the 2024/2025 season provides a clear case. The country produced a record 309,518 tons of cocoa beans. Only approximately 35 percent of this volume was processed locally into higher-value products such as cocoa butter, paste, and chocolate. The majority was exported in raw bean form. This resulted in substantial forgone processing premiums that could have been captured through domestic manufacturing. Despite crossing the 100,000-ton local processing threshold for the first time, the country continues to lose significant value to foreign downstream industries (Ecofin Agency 2025; Business in Cameroon 2026; ONCC data).

Many African commodity-dependent economies show the same pattern. Governments celebrate record raw export volumes of cocoa, minerals, or agricultural products. However, limited

domestic value addition means most economic benefits accrue abroad. This creates high export dependence with low industrial diversification and retained wealth. The illusion persists when policy success is measured primarily by export tonnage rather than domestic value capture.

Execution Economics identifies several conditions that commonly reinforce the Export Illusion:

Commodity-centered policy - Success is measured by tons exported rather than value retained;

Limited downstream processing - Industrial investment concentrates on production while processing capacity develops slowly;

External value chains - Higher-value manufacturing remains geographically separated from primary production;

Short-term incentives - Immediate export earnings often receive greater policy attention than long-term industrial capability.

The framework proposes that the Export Illusion contributes to several recurring development outcomes.

- i. High export dependence.
- ii. Limited industrial diversification.
- iii. Low domestic value addition.
- iv. Persistent dependence upon international commodity prices.
- v. Reduced employment in higher-productivity manufacturing sectors.

These consequences may coexist with increasing export volumes, creating the appearance of progress while structural transformation remains limited. Execution Economics proposes a simple distinction. Production creates commodities. Processing creates industries. Industrial policy should therefore evaluate success not solely by what crosses national borders, but by how much value remains within them.

7.3 The Dependency Premium

The evidence across agro-industrial and manufacturing contexts suggests that the Dependency Premium describes a recurring cost paid by industries that remain dependent upon external capabilities despite achieving domestic production. Local factories may process local resources. Yet machinery, software, spare parts, enzymes, engineering services, technical expertise, and specialized maintenance remain imported. Production becomes domestic. Capability remains external. Industrialization occurs in stages viz: the first stage substitutes imported finished products with domestic production. The second stage develops the domestic capability ecosystem supporting that production. The third stage exports capabilities themselves.

This doctrine suggests that domestic processing operations will face elevated costs and supply vulnerabilities when key inputs and expertise continue to be sourced externally. Several new and planned cassava processing facilities across West and Central Africa face this issue. Local production of cassava roots increases. Yet critical production inputs such as specialized enzymes, spare parts for machinery, technical maintenance expertise, and advanced processing technology

are predominantly sourced from foreign suppliers. This dependence raises overall operating costs, extends maintenance downtime, and limits opportunities for local technological adaptation and innovation (World Bank Supply Chain Report 2025). Many agro-industrial projects in the region achieve initial domestic assembly or basic processing. However, they continue to rely heavily on imported technical services and key components. This creates ongoing cost premiums, supply chain vulnerability to global disruptions, and slower development of local capability ecosystems. The premium reduces competitiveness and long-term industrial resilience. Execution economics proposes that many developing economies successfully complete the first stage while progressing only partially through the second. Consequently, domestic production continues to depend upon international suppliers for critical inputs.

This dependence generates a recurring cost premium. Several mechanisms contribute to this premium:

Imported technology - critical production equipment originates externally;

Imported technical expertise - complex maintenance requires foreign specialists.

Imported industrial inputs - key production materials remain internationally sourced;

Exchange-rate exposure - production costs fluctuate with currency movements;

Supply-chain vulnerability - external disruptions directly affect domestic production.

Each mechanism individually appears manageable. Collectively they reduce industrial resilience. Execution economics proposes that the dependency premium affects industrial competitiveness through several channels: higher operating costs, longer maintenance cycles, reduced technological learning, limited domestic innovation, and lower resilience during global supply disruptions, and reduced long-term competitiveness. The result is an industrial sector that produces locally but continues to rely heavily upon external capability systems. Import substitution alone does not complete industrial transformation. Execution Economics proposes that sustainable industrial development requires deliberate investment in domestic capability. Factories matter, Capability ecosystems matter more.

7.4 The Offtake Gap

Execution Economics proposes that the Offtake Gap describes the structural distance between signed commercial agreements and functioning long-term supply relationships. Investment proposals frequently include projected buyers, Letters of intent, Memoranda of understanding, and preliminary contracts. The framework argues that these documents should not automatically be interpreted as evidence of sustainable market demand. Industrial capacity is frequently developed before supply systems have matured sufficiently to support continuous operation. Financial models assume consistent feedstock availability, quality, reliable logistics, and predictable customer demand. These assumptions often prove optimistic. The Offtake Gap as a doctrine suggests that industrial facilities supported by formal buyer commitments may still operate below capacity when operational supply chains and quality standards remain inconsistent. Numerous cassava and cocoa processing projects in Africa sign Letters of Intent and memoranda of understanding with potential buyers. However, weak supplier coordination, seasonal feedstock

availability fluctuations, and inconsistent quality standards often prevent reliable operational delivery. Facilities are built but operate below capacity because actual supply chains do not match the signed commitments (World Bank 2025 analysis of African food supply chains).

Wider agro-industrial initiatives across the continent show similar gaps. Commercial agreements exist on paper. Yet challenges in consistent feedstock quality, logistics reliability, and buyer commitment fulfillment create significant shortfalls. This leads to idle capacity, higher unit costs, and cash flow instability for processors. The gap highlights the difference between contractual promises and functional market relationships. Execution Economics proposes that the Offtake Gap represents the difference between projected commercial relationships and operational commercial relationships. Closing this gap requires considerably more than contractual documentation. It requires functioning systems.

The Offtake framework identifies several recurring contributors such as:

Unsecured feedstock supply - Raw material availability fluctuates seasonally,

Weak supplier coordination - Producer relationships remain informal or unstable,

Variable quality standards - Inputs fail to satisfy industrial requirements consistently.

Logistics constraints - Transportation interruptions reduce delivery reliability,

Market uncertainty - Projected demand differs from realized purchasing behavior.

The Offtake Gap may produce several observable outcomes such as Factories operating below capacity, Revenue projections falling below expectations, Increasing unit production costs, Cash-flow instability, Investor concern regarding operational performance. Execution Economics proposes that many industrial projects encounter these difficulties not because markets do not exist, but because functioning supply systems have not yet developed. Capacity should follow dependable supply relationships.

Execution Economics therefore recommends asking three questions before major industrial investment. Who guarantees supply continuity? Who guarantees demand continuity? Who owns commercial performance after commissioning? If ownership of these questions remains unclear, the Offtake Gap is likely to widen.

7.5 Causal Relationship within the Value Architecture

Execution Economics proposes that the three doctrines interact sequentially. The framework postulates the following progression.

Value leaves the economy before processing



The Export Illusion becomes active



Processing develops without sufficient domestic capability



The Dependency Premium accumulates



Industrial capacity expands before commercial systems mature



The Offtake Gap emerges

This sequence should be understood as a theoretical proposition intended for future empirical examination rather than an established causal law. If supported through comparative research, it offers a structured explanation for why industrial expansion frequently fails to produce proportional economic transformation.

8. Performance Architecture

How Institutions Become Investable, Credible, and Capable of Sustained Delivery

8.1 Introduction

Institutions do not become investable simply because projects appear technically feasible. Investors evaluate the probability that institutions can repeatedly convert resources into measurable outcomes. Execution Economics proposes that this probability depends upon institutional capability rather than capital alone. Performance Architecture therefore examines the conditions that make organizations, projects, and governments credible execution partners.

Three doctrines explain this architecture.

The Feasibility Gap.

Capacity Before Capital.

The Execution Premium.

Collectively they describe how execution capability becomes an economic asset in its own right.

8.2 The Feasibility Gap

Execution Economics proposes that the Feasibility Gap describes the structural distance between a technically viable project and a financially credible investment opportunity. Many projects successfully demonstrate technical feasibility. Far fewer demonstrate institutional readiness, governance maturity, financial robustness, and execution capability sufficient to attract investment. The Feasibility Gap represents this difference.

A 2026 analysis by the Boston Consulting Group found that only 6 percent of Africa's approximately 130 transnational infrastructure projects are currently under construction, with the primary barrier identified as coordination across complex stakeholder landscapes rather than financing constraints alone (BCG, 2026). Many technically sound African energy and transport projects complete detailed engineering studies and environmental assessments. Conversely, institutional readiness, governance maturity, and multi-stakeholder alignment lag. This prevents financial close and actual implementation. The gap turns bankable technical projects into stalled opportunities. Execution Economics interprets this finding as consistent with the Feasibility Gap operating at continental scale.

Traditional feasibility studies typically answer questions such as: Can the project be built? Will demand exist? Is the technology appropriate? Are financial projections positive? These questions are necessary. Execution Economics proposes they are not sufficient. Investors evaluate additional considerations. Can the sponsoring institution execute? Does governance support accountability? Are implementation risks appropriately allocated? Does management possess relevant experience? Are monitoring systems adequate? Has the institution demonstrated successful delivery previously? The answers to these questions frequently determine investment decisions more than technical feasibility alone.

Several recurring conditions contribute to this gap:

Weak institutional governance - decision structures remain unclear,

Incomplete project preparation - critical technical, financial, environmental, or legal work remains unfinished,

Limited execution history - previous delivery experience is insufficient,

Inadequate risk allocation - project risks remain poorly understood or unevenly distributed,

immature organizational systems - operational capability has not yet reached investment scale.

Execution Economics proposes that institutions experiencing significant Feasibility Gaps often encounter similar outcomes: repeated investor interest without financial close, positive technical evaluations without implementation, extended project preparation periods, increasing transaction costs, and declining stakeholder confidence. The challenge therefore extends beyond project quality, it concerns institutional credibility. Bankability should be viewed as an institutional capability rather than merely a financial condition. Projects become investable when institutions demonstrate the capacity to execute them.

8.3 Capacity before Capital

Execution Economics proposes that Capacity Before Capital represents a sequencing principle rather than simply a financing strategy. The principle is straightforward. Capital scales existing capability. It rarely creates capability where none exists. Development discussions frequently begin with financing. How much funding is required? Where will investment originate? Which institution will provide capital? Execution Economics proposes that these questions should be preceded by another. Can the organization deploy significant capital effectively today? If the answer is uncertain, increasing investment alone is unlikely to improve outcomes. Instead, additional capital may magnify existing organizational weaknesses. NALDCCAM S.A.'s 20,000-hectare cassava agro-industrial initiative is currently in the structuring phase. Emphasis is placed on developing governance frameworks, execution systems, and institutional capacity before seeking large-scale capital deployment. This approach aims to avoid common regional problems of low fund utilization and implementation delay, once funding arrives. Although many African infrastructure and agro-industrial programs have received significant capital commitments, pre-existing institutional capacity and operational systems are insufficient. This has resulted in slow disbursement, cost overruns, and weak performance outcomes. The principle highlights that building capacity first increases the chances that capital produces sustainable results.

Several conditions commonly limit institutional capacity.

Weak governance systems - decision-making structures remain immature,

Limited operational capability - processes have not yet stabilized,

Insufficient management systems - monitoring, reporting, and performance management remain underdeveloped,

Human capital constraints - technical expertise remains limited,

Organizational learning gaps - previous experience has not yet produced repeatable institutional knowledge.

Execution Economics proposes that institutions violating the Capacity Before Capital principle frequently experience: Low fund utilization, Implementation delays, Cost overruns, Weak monitoring performance, Declining donor confidence, Reduced organisational credibility, Capital alone does not correct these problems, Institutional development does. Execution Economics recommends reversing the conventional sequence.

Instead of:

Capital → Capacity,

The framework proposes:

Capacity → Credibility → Capital → Scale.

This sequence increases the probability that investment produces sustainable institutional performance rather than temporary expansion.

8.4 The Execution Premium

Execution Economics proposes that the Execution Premium represents the measurable advantage enjoyed by institutions with demonstrated delivery records over institutions possessing only future potential. Markets reward confidence. Confidence depends upon evidence. Evidence arises through execution. Every investment decision contains uncertainty. Investors therefore seek indicators that reduce uncertainty such as Completed projects, Successful implementation histories, Operational consistency, Reliable governance, Transparent reporting. These characteristics reduce perceived execution risk. Consequently, institutions demonstrating successful delivery frequently obtain: Faster approvals, Lower financing costs, Greater strategic partnerships, higher investor confidence, and more flexible financing conditions. African infrastructure sponsors with verifiable past delivery records consistently attract faster regulatory approvals and more favourable financing terms from development banks and private investors. Their proven track record reduces perceived execution risk and lowers the cost of capital. Projects backed by institutions with strong historical execution performance secure stronger partnerships and more flexible funding conditions. In contrast, first-time sponsors or those without clear delivery records face higher scrutiny, risk premiums, and longer approval processes (African Development Bank project financing data 2025–2026)

Execution Economics proposes that these advantages collectively constitute the Execution Premium.

The framework identifies several contributors:

Demonstrated delivery history - Past execution strengthens future credibility,

Institutional reputation - Stakeholder confidence accumulates over time,

Governance maturity - Decision-making systems become increasingly reliable,

Operational consistency - Processes produce predictable outcomes,

Knowledge accumulation - Learning improves institutional capability.

Together these characteristics reduce uncertainty for investors and development partners.

Execution Economics proposes that organizations with strong execution records benefit from cumulative institutional advantages: Successful delivery attracts investment, investment supports additional delivery, additional delivery strengthens reputation, and reputation attracts stronger partnerships. The cycle becomes self-reinforcing. Conversely, weak execution histories frequently produce the opposite dynamic: Limited confidence, reduced investment, restricted organizational learning, and continuing implementation challenges. Institutions should treat execution itself as a strategic asset. Every successfully completed project contributes not only immediate outcomes but future institutional credibility.

Execution therefore compounds over time.

8.5 Causal Relationship within the Performance Architecture

Execution Economics proposes the following theoretical sequence. Institutional preparation remains incomplete

↓

The Feasibility Gap persists

↓

Capital exceeds organizational capability

↓

Capacity Before Capital is violated

↓

Execution performance weakens

↓

The Execution Premium fails to develop

↓

Future investment becomes increasingly difficult

This sequence should be interpreted as a conceptual model intended for future empirical investigation. Its purpose is to organize recurring institutional observations into a coherent explanatory framework rather than to assert universally established causal relationships.

8.6 Integrating the Three Architectures

The three architecture clusters together form the conceptual foundation of the Execution Economics Canon. Each addresses a distinct dimension of institutional and economic performance. Execution Architecture explains how decisions become stalled before

implementation. Value Architecture explains how production fails to generate proportional economic transformation. Performance Architecture explains why institutions struggle to become credible investment partners. Although presented separately, the three architectures interact continuously. Weak execution increases coordination costs. Weak value capture reduces industrial competitiveness. Weak institutional performance discourages investment. These interactions reinforce one another. Execution Economics therefore proposes that sustainable development depends upon improving all three architectures simultaneously rather than treating governance, industrialization, and investment readiness as isolated policy domains.

The interactions between architectures are not merely conceptual. They are operational. When the Coordination Tax accumulates within an institution's execution system, it extends project timelines and increases administrative overhead. Extended timelines force project teams to rely on emergency external technical interventions such as imported expertise, foreign equipment, and international contractors. This would not have been necessary had implementation proceeded on schedule. Each emergency external engagement deepens the Dependency Premium. Similarly, when the Export Illusion persists at the national level, domestic industrial investment remains insufficient to build the institutional execution capability required to close the Feasibility Gap. Weak value retention produces weak institutional investment, which produces weak execution records, which produces weak Execution Premium. Execution Economics proposes that sustainable development requires interrupting this cycle simultaneously across all three domains rather than addressing each in isolation.

9. The Canon Hypothesis

The VitroScript Canon rests on one foundational hypothesis: Most institutional, industrial, and development failures appear unique when viewed individually. Execution Economics proposes that many of these failures are produced by a limited number of recurring system mechanisms. When those mechanisms are recognized early, systems can be redesigned before failure becomes visible. This hypothesis emerged from repeated observation of projects and institutions that appeared unrelated in sector, geography, ownership structure, and financing model, yet consistently displayed similar execution dynamics. Infrastructure projects stalled despite adequate funding. Agro-industrial investments struggled despite strong market demand. Development programs generated activity without producing measurable outcomes. Institutional reforms produced new procedures without corresponding improvements in delivery.

Granted, the immediate explanations may differ from case to case, the underlying mechanisms displayed remarkable similarity. Execution Economics therefore proposes that these recurring mechanisms deserve to be treated as objects of study in their own right. Rather than viewing every failed project as a unique event requiring a unique explanation, the framework asks whether apparently different failures may in fact be produced by common structural causes. If so, institutional diagnosis can move beyond describing symptoms toward identifying recurring mechanisms before they generate failure.

Three Corollaries

The Canon Hypothesis produces three important corollaries.

Corollary One

The gap between intent and outcome is rarely explained by the absence of resources. Instead, it is explained by the absence of systems capable of deploying those resources effectively toward defined outcomes. Money alone does not create execution. Policy alone does not create implementation. Ideas alone do not create institutions. Between every resource and every outcome lies an execution system. Execution Economics studies that system.

Corollary Two

Execution Economics proposes that many institutional failure mechanisms are recurring, predictable, and structural. They recur because they arise from institutional design rather than individual behavior. They appear across sectors because authority, accountability, coordination, and value creation operate according to similar organizational principles regardless of industry.

Consequently, improving one project without addressing the mechanism that produced its failure simply transfers the same failure into the next project.

Corollary Three

Because these mechanisms are structural, they can potentially be identified before failure becomes visible. This is perhaps the most important implication of the framework. Traditional project evaluation often explains failure after completion. Execution Economics seeks to recognize failure conditions before implementation. Its purpose is therefore diagnostic rather than retrospective. The value of the framework lies not in explaining why yesterday's projects failed, but in improving tomorrow's.

From Diagnosis to Design

If recurring mechanisms can be recognized, they can also be redesigned. Institutional systems are not fixed. Decision architectures can be simplified. Ownership can be clarified. Coordination structures can be redesigned. Industrial value chains can be deepened. Institutional capacity can be strengthened before capital is deployed. Execution Economics therefore views diagnosis and institutional design as inseparable. Understanding failure mechanisms is valuable only insofar as it improves future system design.

Implications of the Canon Hypothesis

If the hypothesis proves useful across multiple contexts, several implications follow. First, project appraisal should examine institutional architecture alongside technical feasibility. Second, industrial policy should evaluate value retention rather than production volume alone. Third, investment readiness should include institutional execution capability as a core assessment criterion. Fourth, governance reform should focus less on adding procedures and more on improving ownership structures. Finally, development finance should recognize that

strengthening execution systems may generate greater long-term returns than repeatedly financing systems that consistently reproduce the same structural weaknesses. The Canon therefore offers a different way of thinking about development performance. Rather than asking only: "Why did this project fail?" Execution Economics asks: "Which recurring system mechanism produced this outcome?" That shift in perspective is the foundation upon which the remainder of the research program is built.

10. Methodological Framework

10.1 Research Philosophy

Execution Economics was developed through a program of practitioner-informed, inductive theory building. Rather than beginning with predefined hypotheses for statistical testing, the framework emerged from sustained observation of recurring institutional patterns encountered during professional practice across project management, institutional development, industrial transformation, investment readiness, procurement, and public policy.

The central research question was not whether individual projects succeeded or failed, but why remarkably similar patterns of underperformance appeared across organizations, sectors, and countries that differed substantially in resources, governance arrangements, and technical capacity.

The recurring appearance of similar institutional mechanisms suggested that these patterns reflected structural characteristics of execution systems rather than isolated organizational deficiencies. The objective therefore became identifying the mechanisms that consistently connected institutional design with execution outcomes.

Accordingly, Execution Economics should be understood as an emerging explanatory framework built through inductive synthesis rather than deductive hypothesis testing.

10.2 Inductive Case-Based System Synthesis

The methodological approach combines elements of practitioner observation, comparative case analysis, mechanism identification, and conceptual synthesis. It is informed by the tradition of inductive theory development described by Glaser and Strauss (1967), Eisenhardt (1989), Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007), and the Extended Case Method articulated by Burawoy (1998).

Rather than treating individual projects as isolated case studies, repeated observations from multiple institutional environments were compared to identify mechanisms that recurred despite differences in sector, geography, organizational structure, and financing arrangements. The analytical unit therefore became the institutional mechanism, not the individual project. This distinction is important. Projects differ enormously. Institutional mechanisms often do not.

10.3 Research Process

The Canon developed through five iterative stages.

Stage One: Practitioner Observation

Over more than a decade of professional engagement, recurring execution challenges were observed across projects involving governments, development institutions, private enterprises, cooperatives, and agro-industrial initiatives throughout Central and West Africa.

These observations were not initially collected to develop theory. They arose naturally through practical involvement in project preparation, implementation, procurement, institutional reform, strategic planning, and investment readiness.

Stage Two: Comparative Pattern Recognition

As observations accumulated, similar patterns began appearing across unrelated contexts. Projects with different funding sources experienced comparable coordination failures. Different institutions exhibited similar ownership ambiguities. Industrial initiatives across multiple sectors displayed comparable value leakage mechanisms. These recurring similarities suggested the presence of deeper structural processes rather than isolated organizational problems.

Stage Three: Mechanism Identification

Each recurring pattern was examined to identify the institutional mechanism responsible for producing it. The emphasis shifted deliberately from describing visible symptoms to explaining the structural conditions that generated those symptoms.

For example:

- repeated approval delays suggested the **No-Objection Paradox**;
- fragmented accountability suggested the **Ownership Illusion**;
- accumulated administrative friction suggested the **Coordination Tax**.

The doctrines therefore describe proposed causal mechanisms rather than merely cataloguing observed behaviors.

Stage Four: Architectural Integration

As additional mechanisms were identified, clear relationships emerged among them. Rather than existing independently, the mechanisms consistently clustered around three broader institutional domains:

- 1) Execution,
- 2) Value Creation,
- 3) Institutional performance.

These became the three architecture clusters that organize the Canon. The architecture therefore emerged from the observed relationships between mechanisms rather than from an a priori conceptual framework.

Stage Five: Theoretical Consolidation

The final stage involved refining definitions, establishing conceptual boundaries between doctrines, identifying causal relationships among architecture clusters, and positioning the framework within the broader literature on institutions, organizational design, development economics, and public administration. The result is the present version of the Execution Economics Canon.

10.4 Triangulation Strategy

To reduce the risk of theory emerging from isolated experience alone, each doctrine was examined against three complementary sources of evidence wherever possible.

Institutional Evidence

Policy documents, governance arrangements, regulatory structures, procurement systems, and project implementation frameworks.

Operational Evidence

Observed project behavior, implementation experiences, coordination processes, execution timelines, and delivery outcomes.

Published Evidence

Academic literature, development reports, industry publications, project documentation, and publicly available institutional analyses. The convergence of these evidence sources increased confidence that identified mechanisms represented recurring institutional phenomena rather than isolated practitioner observations.

10.5 Scope and Nature of the Claims

Execution Economics does not claim that the doctrines presented in this paper constitute universally established empirical laws. Rather, the framework proposes that these mechanisms provide plausible explanations for recurring patterns of institutional underperformance observed across multiple contexts. The doctrines should therefore be understood as theoretical propositions suitable for empirical investigation, refinement, comparison, and potential falsification through future research.

Their value should be assessed according to three criteria:

- 1) Conceptual coherence;
- 2) Explanatory usefulness across diverse institutional contexts;
- 3) Capacity to generate testable propositions for subsequent empirical research.

In this respect, the Canon should be regarded as the beginning of a long-term research program rather than its conclusion.

10.6 Position within the Research Program

Foundational Paper No. 1 establishes the conceptual architecture of Execution Economics. Subsequent papers within the VitroScript Working Paper Series will deepen individual doctrine clusters, propose operational measurement approaches, examine comparative case studies, and subject the framework's propositions to progressively more rigorous empirical evaluation. The long-term objective is the development of Execution Economics as an applied interdisciplinary field integrating institutional economics, organizational theory, public administration, project management, and development practice into a coherent framework for understanding and improving institutional performance.

11. Implications for Practice

The primary purpose of the VitroScript Canon is practical rather than purely descriptive. Execution Economics seeks not only to explain recurring system failures but also to improve the design of institutions before those failures become embedded in projects, programs, and industrial initiatives. If the Canon's propositions are broadly applicable, they carry important implications for governments, development finance institutions, private investors, industrial policy designers, project developers, and organizational leaders. Although the framework remains in an early stage of development, several practical applications already emerge from its architecture.

11.1 Implications for Governments

Governments frequently respond to underperformance by introducing additional procedures, additional oversight mechanisms, or additional reporting requirements. Execution Economics proposes that these responses often address symptoms rather than underlying system mechanisms. The Execution Architecture suggests that effective governance depends less on increasing procedural complexity and more on improving institutional ownership. Before new programs are launched, governments should examine several foundational questions. Who possesses final decision authority? Who owns delivery? Who bears accountability for outcomes rather than activities? How many institutional handoffs exist between policy approval and implementation? Each unnecessary layer increases the Coordination Tax while reducing institutional responsiveness.

Similarly, industrial policy should evaluate success using value-retention indicators rather than production indicators alone. Export growth remains important. However, sustained development depends increasingly upon domestic processing, technological capability, industrial learning, and value-chain integration. The Value Architecture therefore encourages governments to measure not simply what economies produce but what they retain.

11.2 Implications for Development Finance Institutions

Development finance institutions increasingly recognize that financing alone cannot guarantee successful development outcomes. Execution Economics provides a complementary diagnostic framework for evaluating institutional readiness before capital is committed. The Performance Architecture suggests that project appraisal should extend beyond technical feasibility and

financial modeling. Institutional execution capability deserves equal attention. Project preparation facilities may therefore benefit from incorporating questions such as: Does one clearly identified institution own delivery? Where does decision authority ultimately reside? Are governance arrangements likely to generate Coordination Tax? Has the implementing organization demonstrated execution capability previously? Is institutional capacity sufficient to absorb the proposed financing? These questions do not replace existing appraisal methodologies. Rather, they complement them by focusing attention on execution architecture.

11.3 Implications for Project Developers

Project developers frequently devote considerable effort to preparing technical studies, engineering designs, market analyses, and financial projections. These activities remain essential.

Execution Economics proposes, however, that implementation success depends equally upon institutional architecture. Developers should therefore examine execution systems with the same level of rigor devoted to engineering design. Particular attention should be given to: ownership structures; governance arrangements; coordination mechanisms; implementation authority; commercial readiness; supply-chain continuity; and organizational capability. A technically excellent project operating within a weak execution system remains vulnerable, while, a moderately complex project supported by strong execution architecture frequently outperforms expectations.

11.4 Implications for Industrial Policy

Industrial transformation requires more than increasing production capacity. Execution Economics proposes that industrial policy should deliberately strengthen each layer of the value chain. Policy interventions should therefore seek to reduce the Export Illusion by increasing domestic value addition. They should reduce the Dependency Premium through investment in local industrial capability. They should minimize the Offtake Gap by strengthening relationships between producers, processors, logistics providers, financiers, and buyers before large-scale capacity expansion occurs. Industrial policy becomes more effective when production, capability, and markets evolve together.

11.5 Implications for Institutional Leaders

Institutional leaders often assume that organizational performance depends primarily upon strategy. Execution Economics proposes that strategy and execution are inseparable. Ambitious strategies implemented through weak systems rarely achieve intended outcomes. Leaders should therefore view organizational design as a strategic responsibility. Particular attention should be directed toward: simplifying decision pathways; concentrating accountability; strengthening institutional learning; reducing coordination costs; documenting execution knowledge; building operational capability before organizational expansion. Execution capability should become a measurable institutional asset rather than an implicit organizational expectation.

11.6 Implications for Investors

Investors routinely evaluate commercial risk, financial performance, market demand, and technical feasibility. Execution Economics proposes that execution risk deserves equivalent

attention. Investment decisions may therefore benefit from examining institutional questions such as: Can this organization consistently execute? Has it successfully delivered comparable initiatives? How concentrated is decision authority? How resilient is the governance structure?

Where are coordination failures most likely to emerge? Execution capability influences investment performance because implementation quality ultimately determines whether projected returns become realized outcomes.

11.7 Practical Diagnostic Use

Beyond its conceptual contribution, the Canon may serve as an early-stage institutional diagnostic framework. Rather than waiting until projects begin experiencing delays, cost overruns, governance failures, or commercial underperformance, practitioners can use the doctrines as structured diagnostic questions.

For example:

Execution Architecture

- Is the No-Objection Paradox already visible?
- Is ownership concentrated or fragmented?
- Where will Coordination Tax accumulate?

Value Architecture

- Where is value leaving the production system?
- Which external dependencies remain strategically significant?
- Has commercial demand been operationally secured?

Performance Architecture

- Is the institution genuinely investment-ready?
- Has organizational capacity matured before financing?
- What execution record supports future investor confidence?

These questions encourage earlier intervention. The objective is not to predict failure with certainty. It is to improve institutional design before execution begins.

11.8 From Framework to Practice

Execution Economics seeks to shift institutional thinking from reactive problem-solving toward proactive system design. Projects rarely fail suddenly. They usually fail gradually as small structural weaknesses accumulate across governance, coordination, capability, and value creation systems. The Canon encourages practitioners to identify these weaknesses while they remain manageable. Earlier diagnosis permits earlier redesign. Earlier redesign improves execution. Improved execution increases confidence. Confidence attracts capital. Capital deployed through stronger systems produces better outcomes. This progression captures the practical ambition of the VitroScript Canon. It is intended not merely as a framework for explaining development performance, but as a practical tool for improving it.

12. Limitations of the Framework

Every emerging discipline begins with propositions that require refinement through application, critique, and empirical investigation. Execution Economics is no exception. The VitroScript Canon should therefore be understood as a developing explanatory framework rather than a completed theory of institutional and economic performance. Recognizing its present limitations is essential to its continued development. Several important limitations should therefore be acknowledged.

12.1 Empirical Validation

The doctrines presented in this paper emerged through practitioner observation and inductive theory building. Although they draw upon repeated institutional experience across multiple sectors and jurisdictions, they have not yet been subjected to systematic empirical testing using large comparative datasets. Execution Economics therefore proposes recurring mechanisms rather than statistically established regularities. Future empirical research will determine the frequency with which these mechanisms appear, the conditions under which they operate, and the extent to which they influence institutional outcomes. The framework should therefore be interpreted as a program for investigation rather than a completed body of verified empirical knowledge.

12.2 Geographic Scope

The Canon emerged primarily through professional engagement with projects and institutions across Central and West Africa. Many of the observations reflect governance environments, industrial structures, and institutional conditions common within these regions. Execution Economics proposes that the identified mechanisms possess broader relevance because they concern institutional design rather than regional characteristics. Nevertheless, this proposition remains to be tested. Comparative research across Southern Africa, East Africa, North Africa, Latin America, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and other developing regions will help determine the scope of the framework's applicability. Different institutional traditions may reveal additional mechanisms or modify those currently proposed.

12.3 Sectoral Scope

The present version of the Canon has been informed primarily by experience within:

- agro-industrial development;
- infrastructure delivery;
- investment readiness;
- institutional development;
- cooperative systems;
- development finance; and
- public sector implementation.

Although the underlying mechanisms may extend into health, education, digital transformation, financial inclusion, environmental governance, humanitarian programming, and urban development, these applications remain largely unexplored. Future comparative studies across additional sectors will strengthen or refine the framework's explanatory boundaries.

12.4 Causal Relationships

Execution Economics proposes several causal relationships between doctrines.

For example:

Authority fragmentation contributes to the No-Objection Paradox.

The No-Objection Paradox contributes to the Ownership Illusion.

The Ownership Illusion contributes to the Coordination Tax.

Similarly, the Value Architecture and Performance Architecture describe sequential interactions between related mechanisms. These causal chains represent theoretical propositions rather than empirically demonstrated causal laws. Future research employing longitudinal analysis, comparative case studies, and process-tracing methodologies should examine whether these relationships consistently occur as proposed and under what conditions alternative pathways emerge.

12.5 Measurement

Several doctrines imply measurable constructs that have not yet been operationalized.

Examples include:

- Coordination Tax
- Execution Premium
- Dependency Premium
- Feasibility Gap

Each concept suggests measurable organizational or economic effects. However, standardized indicators capable of reliably estimating these effects have not yet been developed. Operationalizing these constructs represents one of the most important next stages in the development of Execution Economics. Without robust measurement, comparative empirical testing remains limited.

12.6 Conceptual Completeness

The present Canon contains nine doctrines organized within three architecture clusters. Execution Economics does not claim that these doctrines exhaustively explain institutional and development performance. Instead, they represent the first identified mechanisms within an expanding research program. Future investigation may identify additional doctrines. Existing doctrines may require refinement. Architecture clusters may evolve. Relationships between mechanisms may become more sophisticated as evidence accumulates. Accordingly, the Canon should be viewed as Version 1.0 of a developing conceptual architecture.

12.7 Relationship to Existing Disciplines

Execution Economics draws upon institutional economics, organizational theory, public administration, development economics, systems thinking, and strategic management. Its contribution therefore lies primarily in synthesis and mechanism identification rather than the creation of an entirely separate intellectual tradition. The discipline should be understood as

complementing existing scholarship rather than replacing it. Its value depends upon demonstrating that its named mechanisms provide explanatory power beyond existing conceptual frameworks. That proposition remains an empirical question for future research.

12.8 Intellectual Humility and Scientific Development

Scientific disciplines mature through continuous testing. The propositions introduced in this paper should therefore remain open to revision. Some doctrines may prove broadly applicable.

Others may require modification. Additional mechanisms may emerge. Alternative explanations may outperform those currently proposed. Execution Economics welcomes this process. A framework that evolves through evidence is ultimately stronger than one that resists refinement. Accordingly, the VitroScript Canon should be regarded as an invitation to collaborative scholarly development rather than a finished body of knowledge. Its long-term credibility will depend not upon the certainty of its initial claims but upon its willingness to adapt in response to empirical evidence.

The limitations identified above do not weaken the framework. They define its research agenda.

By clearly identifying where evidence remains incomplete, where concepts require operationalization, and where comparative testing is needed, the Canon establishes the conditions under which it can mature into a more robust scholarly discipline. Execution Economics therefore begins not with certainty, but with structured inquiry. That commitment to continual refinement is central to the discipline itself.

13. Future Research Directions

The section outlines future research priorities for the VitroScript Canon and Execution Economics, emphasizing that the framework is an evolving research program rather than a completed theory. Its long-term relevance depends on empirical testing, methodological refinement, and application across diverse institutional contexts.

A major priority is the operationalization and measurement of key concepts such as the *Coordination Tax* and *Execution Premium*, using indicators like delays, transaction costs, approval cycles, administrative burden, and decision latency. This would enable comparative analysis and practical institutional diagnostics.

The paper also calls for comparative studies across sectors and regions, extending beyond current focus areas (agro-industry, infrastructure, governance, and finance) to include health, education, energy, climate, digital systems, and more, across different global regions to test universality versus context dependence.

Another focus is testing causal mechanisms, particularly how institutional dysfunctions such as authority fragmentation may lead to downstream effects like the No-Objection Paradox, Ownership Illusion, and Coordination Tax, using methods like case studies and process tracing.

The framework also proposes predictive validation, encouraging forward-looking studies that apply the Canon before project implementation to determine whether identified mechanisms can reliably forecast project performance outcomes.

A key applied output would be the development of an Execution Economics Assessment Tool (EEAT) to translate theoretical doctrines into practical diagnostics for governments, investors, and institutions, focusing on governance, ownership, coordination, capability, and value-chain resilience.

The section further outlines a structured publication roadmap, including deep-dive papers on each architecture: Execution, Value, and Performance, supported by case studies and measurement approaches.

Finally, it positions Execution Economics as a long-term scholarly discipline, to be developed through collective academic engagement, interdisciplinary collaboration, teaching, policy application, and continuous refinement rather than individual authorship alone.

The Coordination Tax - Measurable Indicators

$$CT = f(AL, AM, AC, AP, AD)$$

Where:

AL = Approval Layers: number of distinct approval authorities required before any major decision can proceed.

AM = Approval Multiplier: average number of review cycles per decision before final approval.

AC = Accountability Concentration: inverse measure of how many named individuals share formal accountability for the outcome. Lower concentration = higher tax.

AP = Approval Duration: average elapsed time in days between decision initiation and final approval.

AD = Authority-Decision Alignment: degree to which the person accountable for the outcome also possesses the authority to make the decisions that determine it. Low alignment = high tax.

The Coordination Tax Index (CTI) for any project or institution can therefore be estimated as:

$$CTI = (AL \times AM \times AP) / (AC \times AD)$$

Higher CTI values indicate greater Coordination Tax. The index is not a precise financial measure but a diagnostic ratio that allows comparison across institutions, projects, and time periods.

Practical interpretation of the CTI:

A CTI below 2.0 suggests manageable coordination friction. The institution is likely to execute at reasonable speed.

A CTI between 2.0 and 5.0 suggests moderate coordination friction. Delivery is possible but timelines and costs are at risk.

A CTI above 5.0 suggests severe coordination friction. The Coordination Tax is likely consuming a disproportionate share of institutional resources. Redesign of authority structures is recommended before capital deployment.

These thresholds are preliminary and require empirical calibration across multiple institutional contexts. They are offered as a starting point for diagnostic application rather than established benchmarks.

14. Conclusion

Execution Economics does not argue that finance, governance, infrastructure, or technical expertise are unimportant. It argues that these elements achieve their developmental potential only when embedded within institutional architectures capable of converting intent into execution and execution into measurable outcomes. Whether the framework ultimately becomes an accepted analytical tradition will depend not on the authority of its author but on its capacity to withstand empirical scrutiny, generate useful predictions, and improve institutional practice. The contribution of this paper is therefore deliberately modest but intentionally ambitious: it proposes that execution deserves recognition not merely as a management concern, but as an economic phenomenon worthy of systematic scholarly investigation.

About VitroScript

VitroScript is an institutional strategy, execution systems, and research practice based in Yaoundé, Cameroon. The organization specializes in execution economics, institutional architecture, investment readiness, industrial transformation, governance systems, project structuring, and strategic advisory services. Its research program seeks to develop practical frameworks that improve the capacity of governments, development institutions, private enterprises, and emerging industries to convert ambition, policy, and capital into measurable development outcomes. The Execution Economics Canon is the flagship publication of the VitroScript Working Paper Series.

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About the Author

Dr. Nchinda Nelson Kekoh is an Institutional Systems Architect, Project Management professional, Policy Analyst, and Execution Economics researcher based in Yaoundé, Cameroon. He is the Founder of VitroScript and the developer of the Execution Economics framework and the VitroScript Canon, an evolving body of applied scholarship that examines how institutions, projects, industries, and economies convert intent, capital, and policy into measurable outcomes.

His professional work integrates research with practice across institutional development, project management, public policy, investment readiness, industrial strategy, governance systems, procurement, strategic communications, and agro-industrial transformation. Through advisory and implementation roles, he has contributed to the design, structuring, and execution of projects within the public, private, and development sectors across Central and West Africa.

Dr. Kekoh currently serves as Chief Operations Officer of NALDCCAM S.A., where he contributes to the strategic planning and operational execution of one of Central Africa's largest integrated cassava industrialization programs, covering commercial production, processing, value addition, and industrial transformation. He also serves as Project Manager and Policy Expert at Golden Age Soccer (GOLDAS), where he supports project planning, institutional policy development, strategic execution, organizational systems strengthening, and long-term program implementation. His research focuses on institutional performance, execution capability, organizational design, governance systems, industrial transformation, development finance, project delivery, and the economics of execution. Through the Execution Economics research program, he seeks to develop practical frameworks that help governments, development finance

institutions, corporations, and development organizations diagnose recurring execution failures and design systems capable of converting potential into measurable performance. The VitroScript Canon represents the foundational scholarly output of this research program and is intended to evolve through empirical testing, practitioner application, and academic engagement.

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Any remaining errors, interpretations, or theoretical positions are the sole responsibility of the author.

Declaration

Execution Economics is presented as an emerging practitioner-informed research program. The doctrines contained within this paper represent theoretical propositions derived through inductive analysis of recurring institutional patterns observed across multiple professional contexts. They should not be interpreted as universally established empirical laws but as propositions intended for scholarly examination, empirical testing, practical application, and continued refinement. The author welcomes constructive critique, comparative application, replication studies, and interdisciplinary engagement that contribute to the continued development of the framework. Scientific progress depends upon critical evaluation. Execution Economics is offered in that spirit.

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